

DARWIN AND DESIGN - A WYSOCS study course for 2009

Speaking of Professor Michael Reiss, the Royal Society's Education Director, Richard Dawkins commented "A clergyman in charge of education for the country's leading scientific organisation – it's a Monty Python sketch"! while Nobel prize winner Sir Harry Kroto wrote "He, together with all religious people, falls at the first hurdle of the main requirement for honest scientific discussion because they accept unfounded dogma as having fundamental significance."

How can Christians respond faithfully and intelligently to such claims?

Huge programmes will celebrate the 200th anniversary of Charles Darwin's birthday on February 24th ('Darwin Day') and the 150th anniversary of the publication of *Origin of Species* on November 24th ('Evolution Day'). Using the format of this year's successful study course *The Transforming Vision*, we are now planning a serious discussion of issues raised by the 2009 Darwin events.

Since Richard Dawkins published *The God Delusion* in 2006, we have had a no-holds-barred assault on religion and a promotion of scientific materialism. For a long time atheist media dominance has banned serious critique of their positions, but we can see change in the higher profile recently given to Dawkins' debates with John Lennox. To showcase the illiberal persecution of scientists who dare to question Darwin, some are calling for *Darwin Day* to be called *Academic Freedom Day* – <http://www.academicfreedomday.com/>

Clearly, origins will figure large in 2009 and we intend to focus our study course on it in a WYSOCS worldview perspective. Then, on October 30th and 31st, we are organising a conference on *Darwin and Design* with high profile speakers who are engaged in the public debates.

We invite you to join us for a *Darwin and Design* course, seven sessions on Wednesdays: **March 11th, April 29th, May 13th and 27th, June 10th and 24th and July 8th**. Each session at *Outwood House* will be led by Arthur Jones and Mark Roques and allow time for us all to engage with the issues and what they mean for our lives. The sessions will last a couple of hours (arrive 7.45 for 8.00 pm.)

The cost will be £175 (concessions £105) plus the cost of three books, estimated at £30 to £40. Tip-top refreshments (wine, coffee and cheese) are included. If you need further concessions and could offer help in running the evenings, please let us know.

Places will again be limited to c.12 to encourage full participation, so if you are up for it, get in touch fast!

Arthur Jones and Mark Roques,
WYSOCS Tutors & Co-Directors of Reality Bites

Draft Schedule:

Session 1: Competing Stories: the relevance of the Biblical worldview

Session 2: Unpacking 'Science' and 'Religion'

Session 3: Education, Indoctrination and God

Session 4: Creation and Evolution: what are the options?

Session 5: Science and Design

Session 6: What about Intelligent Design?

Session 7: Darwin and 'Cross-Cultural Mission' Today